

THE STAUROTHECA OF ROMANUS AT MONTE CASSINO

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This article amplifies the treatment given to the Staurotheca of Romanus as part of a paper, "The Treasure of Monte Cassino in the Earlier Middle Ages," read by Dr. Willard during the Symposium on the abbey held at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1975.

A staurotheca of Byzantine provenance is the sole liturgical object of goldsmith art from the earlier Middle Ages preserved at the abbey of Monte Cassino. While the staurotheca is a relatively modest one, there are a number of elements of distinct interest which warrant a closer study than it has hitherto received either from Byzantinists or from scholars of medieval civilization in the West.

As part of the treasure in the rebuilt basilica of St. Benedict at Monte Cassino, the staurotheca is found encased in a silver gilt crucifix which, mounted on its pedestal, serves as a reliquary for it (figs. 1 and 2). The measurements of the reliquary are: crucifix alone 34 cm., base 19 cm., for an overall height of 53 cm.; crossarm 25 cm. wide; thickness 6 cm. Since the history of the staurotheca in recent centuries is linked with its present container, the latter should first be described.¹

On the front of the crucifix is a figure of Christ on the Cross in a style characteristic of the high Renaissance and early Baroque periods in Italy. The repoussé decoration of the cross, effectively contrasting the silver and the gilding, includes at each of the four extremities the bust of an Evangelist within a quatrefoil. The miniature cones attached to the arms add further ornament. The separate plates of the obverse and reverse of the cross, when joined, form a hollow space which holds the staurotheca. On the reverse side, the quatrefoils at the ends of the vertical and horizontal arms frame rosettes, while the central area is of open metalwork through which one may see the front of the staurotheca where the wood revered as a fragment of the True Cross is exposed in its own container. In this back-to-front arrangement, the reverse of the staurotheca, naturally, is concealed behind the front of the crucifix, which is thus both a reliquary for the staurotheca and a monstrance or ostensorium for displaying the relic.

Close examination reveals that the crucifix was specifically designed to secure and exhibit the Monte Cassino staurotheca, which is of the so-called patriarchal type with two crossarms. This is evident because the lower, longer arm of the staurotheca fits exactly at the intersection of the crucifix arms, while just above this crossing, there are apertures at the sides permitting the upper crossarm of the staurotheca to protrude slightly beyond the metal. A red silk cord which passes behind the staurotheca and through the pierced metalwork is fastened with a wax seal of the same color. The crucifix reliquary

¹ I wish to express my appreciation to Don Tommaso Leccisotti, the learned Archivista of Monte Cassino, and to the able Assistant Archivista, Don Faustino Avagliano, for their many kindnesses, and particularly for having the crucifix reliquary specially photographed for this paper. During a visit to the abbey in 1974 I was privileged to examine the object.

thus stands as a thoroughly accomplished example of goldsmith work of its period, perhaps made by an artist from the Abruzzo region.²

Turning now to a description of the staurotheca itself, it should be noted that in 1934 the object received brief but critically important attention in an article concerning recorded or existing relics of the Passion at Monte Cassino, written by the abbey's scholarly Archivista, Don Mauro Inguanez. Included were good illustrations of both the front and reverse of the staurotheca,³ reproduced here in figs. 3 and 4 from the original photographs.

The staurotheca itself is a two-armed cross of gold or silver gilt which holds the ancient-looking pieces of wood. On the front the wood, securely held in place by the metal, is exposed, while on the reverse the staurotheca bears an inscription in Greek uncials. The six extremities of the cross are protected by sheaths (bouterolles) of the same metal, originally ornamented on the front with seven precious stones or cabochons. Four of the jewels are still in position: a sapphire at each end of the lower crossarm, an opal and a topaz on the longer bouterolle at the bottom of the cross. Fastened above and below the crossarms at the intersection with the stem there were once eight pearls, of which five are preserved in place. The measurements of the staurotheca are: height 15 cm.; lower crossarm 8 cm.; upper crossarm 5.5 cm.; thickness 1.5 cm.

The inscription on the reverse side, constituting three lines of verse, proves to be of extraordinary interest (fig. 4, and line drawing based on the same photograph of the original). As an authority on Byzantine literature and epigraphy, Professor Ihor Ševčenko has graciously studied my material on the staurotheca and has made available to me the following analysis of the

² In his article, "Reliquie della Passione a Montecassino," *L'Illustrazione vaticana*, V, 7 (1-15 aprile, 1934), 315-16, M. Inguanez referred to the crucifix reliquary as "opera a sbalzo di oreficeria abruzzese del secolo XVI," but he furnished no supporting evidence for the provenance of the artist. Records indicating that the goldsmith was from the Abruzzo may have been available to him, though they were possibly lost in the destruction of the abbey in 1944. The Monte Cassino crucifix resembles in style and in some details certain examples of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the Abruzzo. Cf. the processional cross of 1629 from the Chiesa Madre in Loreto Aprutino bearing the name of the Aquila artist, Francesco Novelli, who was clearly influenced by the art of Michelangelo and of Cellini. That crucifix is among the illustrations in P. Piccirilli, "L'oreficeria Aquilana nei secoli XVI, XVII, XVIII e la croce processionale della Chiesa Madre di Fossa," *Rassegna d'arte*, 17 (1917), 163. For illustrations of the Novelli cross and others of the region, see also V. Balzano, *L'arte abruzzese* (Bergamo, 1910), 106-16. The little-known Monte Cassino crucifix, quite apart from the interest of the staurotheca it holds, is worthy of study by specialists in late Renaissance and early Baroque goldsmiths' art.

³ Inguanez, *op. cit.*, 315-16. For his article, the staurotheca was removed from its crucifix reliquary in order to be photographed—the only time this is known to have been done. The staurotheca had previously been mentioned, together with a quite inadequate representation of the inscription within the outline of a two-armed cross, in A. Caravita, *I codici e le arti a Montecassino*, I (Montecassino, 1869), 392-97. Both Caravita and Inguanez attempted to transcribe the Greek inscription but neither recognized its verse form, which was first noted by A. Frolow, *La relique de la Vraie Croix* (Paris, 1961), 266-68, no. 205 among the "pièces justificatives" (see also nos. 152, 195, and 227). But his treatment of the staurotheca was seriously impaired because he was not aware of the Inguanez article with its invaluable illustrations. For the staurotheca, and particularly its inscription, Frolow, therefore, had to depend on the reference in the Caravita volume and a notice entirely drawn from it in A. Paspatis, *Βυζαντινὰ μελέται τοπογραφικαὶ καὶ ἱστορικαὶ* (Constantinople, 1877), 137. The Inguanez article is the source of the reference to the staurotheca in C. Cecchelli, *La vita di Roma nel Medio Evo*, I, *Le arte minori e costume* (Rome, 1952), 26, 28, and in E. Galasso, *Oreficeria medioevale in Campania* (Benevento, 1969), 45; neither illustrates the object.

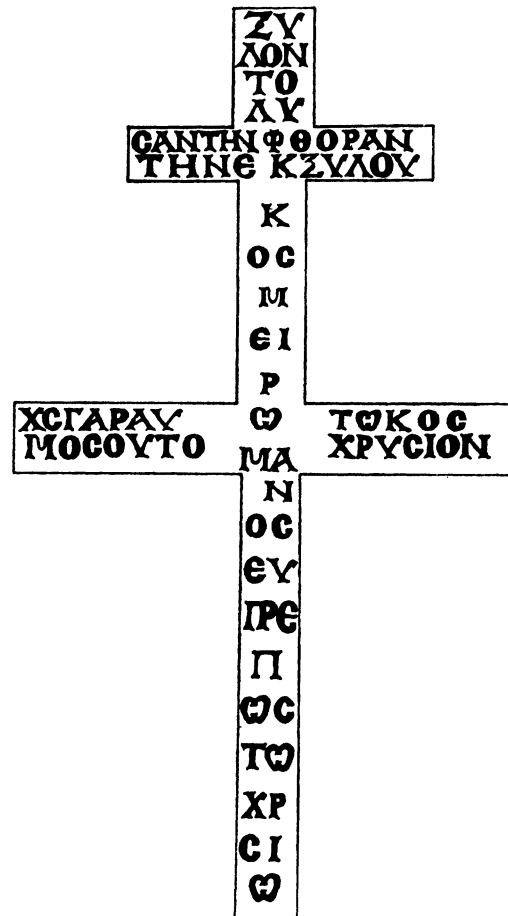
inscription; he also directed the work of the artist, Victoria Chu, who executed the drawing.

In the manner typical of patriarchal crosses with inscriptions, the first verse begins in the top section and continues across the shorter upper arm. The second verse then carries all the way to the bottom of the stem to the protective metal sheath. The poem is completed by a third verse which runs horizontally across the lower arm of the cross. The verses are transcribed into “normalized” Greek thus:

ξύλον τὸ λύσαν τὴν φθορὰν τὴν ἐκ ξύλου
κοσμεῖ Ῥωμανὸς εὐπρεπῶς τῷ χρ[υ]σίῳ
Χ(ριστὸ)ς γὰρ αὐτῷ κόσμος, οὐ τὸ χρυσίον.

A translation of the poem into English is as follows:

The Wood that redeemed us from
the Fall caused by wood
Romanus did adorn with a garment
of gold;
For his World and adornment is Christ,
not the gold.



A. Drawing of Inscription on Reverse of Staurotheca (V. Chu)

In the first verse, “Wood” is the Wood of the Cross and the wood of the tree of Paradise, which caused our corruption; the former abolished the original sin brought about by the latter. In the last verse, “World and adornment” renders the one word *Kosmos*. In Greek this is a play on words, since *Kosmos* has both of these meanings, and the Logos, that is, Christ, is called *Kosmos* because the world is created in Him. In this verse there is also a “twice-removed” pun on Christ (*Christos*) and gold (*chrysos*, pronounced *chrisos*).

There is no way of identifying the Romanus of the inscription. Possibly he was the Byzantine emperor of that name who ruled from 959 to 963; or

he may have been an official or nobleman. The character of the lettering in the inscription points to a dating of the staurotheca around the second half of the tenth century.

A study of this staurotheca must weigh the evidence that seems to equate it with a "not small" fragment of wood of the Lord's Cross, encased in gold and surrounded with jewels and pearls, which, according to the *Chronicon Casinense*, was brought from Jerusalem and given to the abbey by a member of the community in the late tenth century. According to the same source, a silver reliquary was made for the object at the order of a Cassinese abbot in the first quarter of the following century.

The two passages describing these events are found in that portion of the *Chronicon* to the year 1075, composed around 1100 by the abbey's admirable historian, Leo Marsicanus, also known as Leo Ostiensis.⁴ In the text of the chronicle as edited by W. Wattenbach, the first of the passages is contained in book II, chapter 11, and the second in chapter 53 of the same book.⁵

For our purpose, it is best to quote the applicable passages not from the Wattenbach edition, but instead directly from folios 136^r and 161^r of the oldest surviving text, preserved in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich as part of cod. lat. Monacensis 4623, a Beneventan MS now universally recognized as being, in a special sense, the autograph copy of Leo Marsicanus (figs. 5 and 6).⁶ From a paleographic standpoint, the Munich MS of the *Chronicon* was long the object of intense interest and indeed of controversy which, until resolved in the last two decades, cast some doubts on the authorship and raised questions about the reliability of the text. In order to understand the peculiarities of the scripts and their significance as exemplified in our two facsimile folios, let us summarize the major discussions concerning the MS.

Early in this century A. Chroust considered the Beneventan script in cod. lat. Mon. 4623 almost entirely in Leo's hand.⁷ E. A. Lowe, however, in publishing an excellent description of the MS together with facsimiles of four folios, showed that the Munich MS could be only in part the autograph of Leo. He identified Leo's script as mainly that of the interlinear glosses and the margi-

⁴ There is extensive literature on Leo and his high place among historians in the Middle Ages, but it suffices to refer to the discussion, with essential bibliography, in the important forthcoming publication by H. Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, I (Rome-Cambridge, Mass.), *passim*. The alternate name, Leo Ostiensis, refers to the fact that in later life Leo was appointed Cardinal bishop of Ostia and Velletri.

⁵ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis* or, as also cited, *Chronicon Casinense*, ed. W. Wattenbach, in MGH, SS, VII (Hannover, 1846), 636 line 17 for book II, chap. 11, and 662 line 18 for book II, chap. 53. A much needed new edition of *Chron. Cas.* is in preparation for MGH by H. Hoffmann of the University of Göttingen. Students of Monte Cassino's history are deeply indebted to Professor Hoffmann for an authoritative series of articles he has published over a number of years, in *Deutsches Archiv* and in *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* (hereafter, *QuF*), which constitute a comprehensive introduction to his forthcoming edition of the *Chronicon*.

⁶ The *Chronicon Casinense* is found in fols. 85^r-189^r, extending from the prologue to the point corresponding to the end of book II, chap. 91, in later versions of the work. (The Wattenbach edition uses the MS only in the *apparatus criticus*.) The codex measures 19.5 cm. × 13.5 cm. I wish to thank the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek for furnishing the desired photographs.

⁷ A. Chroust, *Monumenta palaeografica. Denkmäler der Schreibkunst des Mittelalters*, ser. I, fasc. X (Leipzig, 1903), pl. 2, with facsimile reproductions of four folios.

nalìa.⁸ A few years later, H.-W. Klewitz argued that the script was essentially that of Peter the Deacon, last of the continuators of the *Chronicon*, a man long proven as a falsifier in some of his writings.⁹ But P. Meyvaert, in a brilliant article, subsequently established beyond question that all the existing autographs of Peter are in a rather poor Caroline hand, and that he did not write in Beneventan script; therefore he could have had no part in the Munich MS.¹⁰ There soon followed further proof by Meyvaert that the handwriting of the marginalia is certainly Leo's.¹¹ Recently, H. Hoffmann has published a masterful and highly detailed analysis of cod. lat. Mon. 4623 and Leo's part in it.¹²

Due especially to these later studies, we can now clearly visualize the procedure employed by Leo in drawing up the version of the *Chronicon* in cod. lat. Mon. 4623, representing an intermediate stage in his history of the abbey. Working from an earlier draft (or drafts) now lost, he set a number of Beneventan scribes to copying the main body of the text in slightly varying but always calligraphic script. Leo then carefully reviewed the product, and on the basis of further data or on reconsidering the evidence, made numerous deletions, substitutions, corrections, and additions. These revisions, interlinear or as marginalia, are mostly in Leo's own rather cramped Beneventan working hand.¹³ This visible indication of Leo's method of composing the chronicle does much to inspire our confidence in him. It should also be noted that throughout his entire part of the *Chronicon* he displays a keen historical interest in the treasure of his abbey, for he frequently records items as though he were incorporating inventories at appropriate points in his narrative.

The first of the two passages, which concern a relic of the Passion brought to Monte Cassino from the East, occupies the last six lines (17–22) of folio 136^r in the MS. The main text transcribes as follows: *Isdem ferme diebus frater huius Aligerni abbatis, Leo nomine, | monachus professione, portionem ligni dominice crucis | non parvam, auro gemmisque pretiosis ac margaritis circumdatam, et in [added above line] argenteo loculo venerabiliter collocatam, revertens a Ierusalima detulit, et huic sancto | cenobio devotissimus obtulit.* ("In about these days the brother of this Abbot Aligernus, Leo by name, monk by profession,

⁸ E. A. Lowe, *Scriptura Beneventana*, II (Oxford, 1929), pl. 78. This outstanding work followed his fundamental book, *The Beneventan Script* (Oxford, 1914), now being prepared for republication in augmented form, edited by Professor Virginia Brown.

⁹ H.-W. Klewitz, "Petrus Diaconus und die Montecassiner Klosterchronik des Leo von Ostia," *Auf*, 14 (1936), 414–53.

¹⁰ P. Meyvaert, "The Autographs of Peter the Deacon," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 38 (1955), 114–38.

¹¹ P. Devos and P. Meyvaert, "Autour de Léon d'Ostie et de sa *Translatio S. Clementis* (Légende Italique des SS. Cyrille et Méthode)," *AnalBoll*, 74 (1956), esp. 211–17.

¹² H. Hoffmann, "Studien zur Chronik von Montecassino," *DA*, 29 (1973), 60, 113–38 and plates. He shows that the text of the *Chronicon* found in cod. lat. Mon. 4623 must have been written at Monte Cassino between 1099 and 1103. On the MS, see also Bloch, *op. cit.*, I, pt. I, Appendix I: The Recent Literature on the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis* and on the *Registrum Petri Diaconi*.

¹³ Hoffmann, *ibid.*, 115–26, lists nine hands, A–I, for the main body of the text and gives their respective folio sections. Fol. 136^r is among those by hand C, while fol. 161^r is in hand D, the former employing twenty-two lines to the page, the latter, splendidly calligraphic, nineteen lines. Four different correcting hands, a–d (though largely in d), are identified in the interlinear script and marginalia. Hand d, Leo's own, is included on both of our folios.

on returning from Jerusalem carried away a not small piece of the wood of the Lord's Cross, surrounded with gold and precious gems and pearls and placed with veneration in a silver reliquary; and deeply devoted, he offered it to this monastery.")

On examining these lines in the facsimile one sees that the author, after reviewing the text of the draft, had decided to delete the phrase *et in argenteo loculo venerabiliter collocatam* (lines 20 and 21). Leo's probable reason for the revision will be evident when the second passage is considered. Moreover, the day and month, *die nonarum novembrium* ("on the day of the nones of November"), for the arrival of the object at Monte Cassino was added by Leo at the end of this first passage (line 22), apparently on the basis of further data.

Although Leo Marsicanus does not give the exact year when the pilgrim Leo, after returning from Jerusalem, donated the relic to the abbey, that time can be fixed around 990. The *isdem ferme diebus* at the beginning of the passage refers to a cataclysmic event described in the preceding few lines of the folio, namely an earthquake which wrought great havoc and killed many people in the cities of Benevento and Capua and the surrounding areas.¹⁴ A principal source used by Leo for his description is found in the *Annales Beneventani*, where the earthquake is entered for the year 990.¹⁵

This period within the reign of Abbot Manso (985–96) was a time of trouble and unrest at Monte Cassino, with the monks unusually prone to make pilgrimages. The preceding abbot, Aligern (949–85), brother of the traveler Leo, was one of the greatest of the Cassinese abbots, a capable administrator who succeeded in restoring to his monastery most of the possessions lost after the Saracenic destruction of 883. He was at the same time a strong spiritual leader of the community. Manso, on the contrary, was a man of worldly character. He had been elected abbot through the crass intervention of Princess Aloara, widow of Prince Pandulf I of Capua. Bitterly resentful of Manso's rule, a number of the most respected members left their congregation, some forever, others for long sojourns in the East before returning to the monastery. According to Leo Marsicanus in the *Chronicon*, among the latter group was John of Benevento, who spent some years first on Mount Sinai, then on Mount Athos whence he returned to become Abbot John III (998–1010). Among them also was Theobald of Chieti who went to Jerusalem and later was appointed prior (1007–22) of Monte Cassino's important Abruzzo dependency of San Liberatore

¹⁴ Lines 5–16 on fol. 136^r of cod. lat. Mon. 4623: *Ante | hoc ferme biennium ingens terremotus factus | est tam in Capua quam in Benevento; ita | ut in Capua plurimas domos everteret, | et campanas eiusdem civitatis per se sonari | faceret. In Benevento autem Viperam deiecit, | et subvertit quindecim turres, in quibus multi [interlinear correction to centum quinquaginta] | homines mortui sunt. De Ariano et Fre|cento magnam partem destruxit. Compsanam | civitatem prope mediam evertit, eiusque episcopum cum | plurimis aliis occidit. Ronsam vero cum universis fere in ea manentibus summersit.*

¹⁵ The best edition of the *Annales Beneventani* is by O. Bertolini, in *BISI*, 42 (1923), 101–63, preceded by an exemplary introduction, 1–99. The entry for the earthquake of 990 reads as follows in the more complete of the two texts used by Bertolini (p. 127): *DCCCCLXXXX . . . hoc anno VIII kalendas novembris fuit terraemotus unde corruerunt turres. XV. in Benevento, et Vipera domus multe, et ex eo mortui sunt. CL. homines.* See also pp. 70 and 71 of the editor's introduction, showing that Leo must have had a further source (now lost) in his detailed treatment of the earthquake. On this earthquake, cf. no. 85 in the standard work by M. Baratta, *I terremoti d'Italia* (Turin, 1901), 18.

alla Maiella, where he proved his exceptional capabilities. The pilgrim Leo's journey thus fits into a period of the abbey's history when there was a pattern of exceptionally close association with the Byzantine East.¹⁶

The second passage in the *Chronicon Casinense* referring to the staurotheca falls within the early years of Theobald of Chieti's reign soon after his election as abbot of Monte Cassino in 1022. Leo begins his account of Theobald's abbacy (apparently from a now lost inventory) by listing some of the *ornamenta ecclesiastica* ordered for the monastery, including a silver processional cross, two large and very beautiful bells, and silver panels for the altar of St. Gregory. Then in lines 11–14 of folio 161^r in cod. lat. Mon. 4623 (fig. 6) comes this sentence: *Fecit et capsulam argenteam, | ubi portionem ligni dominice crucis | quam superius a Leone monacho huc [corrected from hic] allatam | ostendimus reverenter locavit.* ("He [Theobald] also made a silver reliquary where he reverently placed the fragment of wood of the Lord's Cross which we have shown above was brought here by the monk Leo"). Since the evidence on which this statement was based appeared compelling to the chronicler, and since the original phrase in folio 136^r showed the relic already in a silver reliquary (*et in argenteo loculo venerabiliter collocatam*) when it reached Monte Cassino, Leo resolved the seeming inconsistency by deleting the words in the earlier passage—an example of his care in composing the *Chronicon*.

The two accounts in the *Chronicon Casinense* concerning the fragment of wood of the True Cross brought to the abbey from Jerusalem have an interest of their own in casting light on the religious and cultural life of the monastery in the critical period of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. At this point the question must be asked: can the object described by Leo Marsicanus reasonably be identified with the Byzantine staurotheca now at Monte Cassino in its relatively modern crucifix reliquary?

The treasure of Monte Cassino reached its culmination during the reign of Abbot Desiderius (1058–87), when it was one of the richest among all of the monasteries and churches in the Latin West.¹⁷ However, in the twelfth century, the fortunes of the abbey began a sharp decline. Except for a considerable number of codices which have survived, the most precious objects of the earlier Middle Ages were dispersed. As early as 1143, when it was sacked by King Roger II, the monastery lost nearly all its treasure, apparently including the Abbey's most sumptuous single object of goldsmiths' and enamelers' art, the

¹⁶ This period from the election of Aligern as abbot in 949 through the earlier years of the eleventh century, a time of Byzantine hegemony in South Italy and to a marked degree at Monte Cassino, constitutes an important section in Bloch, *Monte Cassino*, I, pt. I, 1. On the evidence for dating the reigns of Abbots Aligern, Manso, and John III, see H. Hoffmann, "Die älteren Abtslisten von Montecassino," *QuF*, 47 (1967), 284–303. For the first and last years of Aligern's abbacy, see esp. the excursus in H. Bloch, "Monte Cassino's Teachers and Library in the High Middle Ages," *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1972), 602–5. The sojourns in the Byzantine East on the part of Cassinese monks, caused by their dissatisfaction with Manso, is well treated in P. McNulty and B. Hamilton, "Orientale Lumen et Magistra Latinitas: Greek Influence on Western Monasticism (900–1100)," *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos, 963–1963*, I (Paris, 1963), 184–86. Cf. Jean Décarreaux, *Normands, papes et moines. Cinquante ans de conquêtes et de politique religieuse en Italie méridionale et en Sicile (Milieu du XI^e siècle-début du XII^e)* (Paris, 1974), 42–44, and Appendix 8, 126–27.

¹⁷ I am currently engaged in a study of Monte Cassino's treasure under Abbot Desiderius.

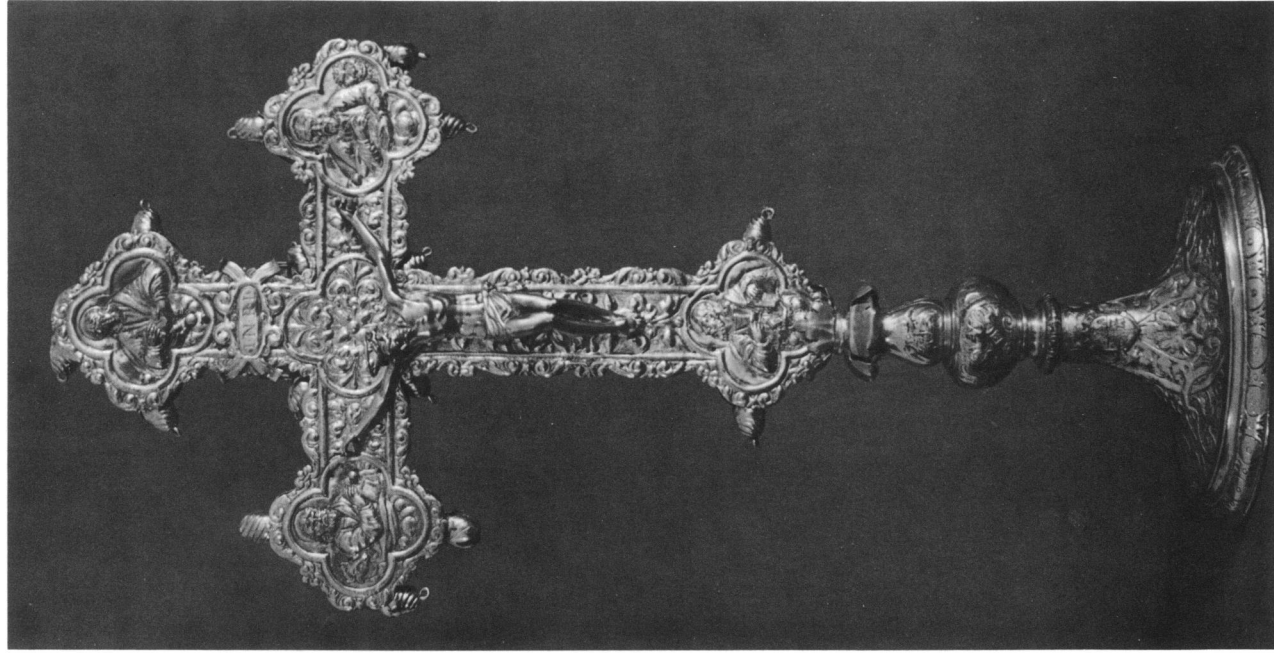
antependium of the high altar which Desiderius had ordered to be made in Constantinople as part of his program for decorating the new basilica of St. Benedict, dedicated in 1071.¹⁸ The larger and more valuable objects in precious metals and jewels, readily convertible to other forms of wealth, would naturally be the primary targets of invading armies or marauding bands seeking to despoil the monastery. It may be, therefore, that the small size of the Byzantine relic brought to Monte Cassino *ca.* 990 was its saving grace, since it could easily be concealed in the face of impending danger. An indication that it did indeed escape the vicissitudes of the later Middle Ages (including the catastrophic earthquake of 1349 which largely destroyed the Desiderian basilica) is suggested by an item in a 1497 inventory of the abbey's treasure.¹⁹

That the relic described in the *Chronicle* is identical with the staurotheca which has survived at Monte Cassino seems highly probable when one considers their common elements. Each concerns a fragment of wood considered to be from the True Cross. While Leo does not specify that the wood was shaped in the form of a cross, this is strongly implied by the nature of the object and by his reference to it as a *portionem ligni dominice crucis non parvam*; thus it was not merely a small particle.²⁰ In both instances the relic itself can properly be described as encased in gold and surrounded with jewels and pearls. Finally, the dating of the staurotheca around the second half of the tenth century further supports the view that the relic of the True Cross preserved at the abbey is the same object brought to Monte Cassino by the monk Leo when, in the closing years of that century, he returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

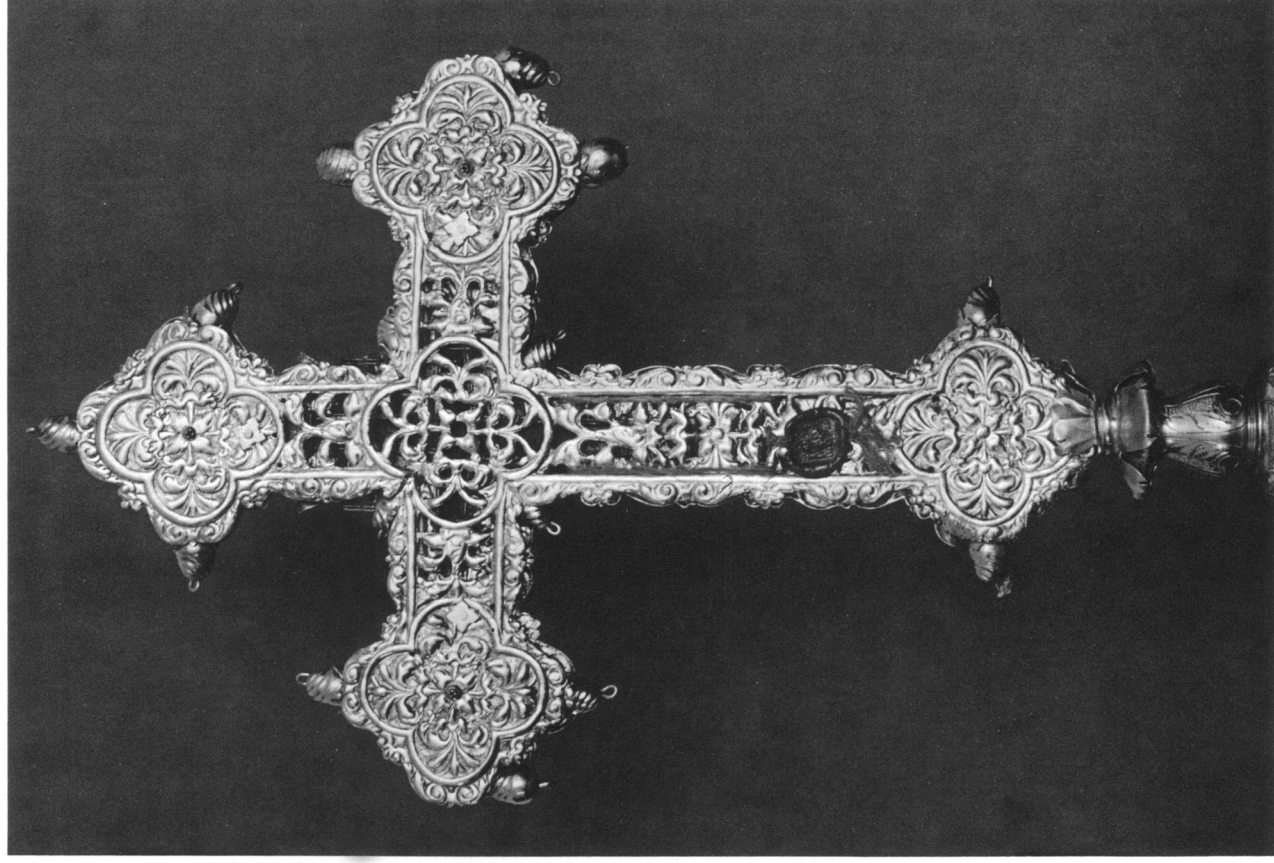
¹⁸ *Annales Casinenses*, entry for A.D. 1143: *Rex iterum ad hunc locum venit. . . . Thesaurum huius loci omnem cum tabula ante altare tollit, praeter crucem maiorem cum cyburio et tribus tabulis altaris*, in MGH, SS, XIX, 310. The account of the Byzantine antependium commissioned by Desiderius is found in *Chron. Cas.*, III, 32, in MGH, SS, VII, 722.

¹⁹ The complete inventory of February 1497 was published from the Cassinese archives by Caravita, *op. cit.* (note 3 *supra*), 380–93; for our item, cf. 383: *Lignum sanctae Crucis cum cassula ornata circumcirca ex argento*.

²⁰ The classic study of the numerous forms of reliquaries of the True Cross is A. Frolov, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix* (Paris, 1965); for those in the shape of a cross with two arms, see esp. 124–36, with many references to the items described in his earlier *La relique de la Vraie Croix* (note 3 *supra*). On relics and reliquaries of this type, cf. J. Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1940), 473 ff. Braun's study makes no reference to the Monte Cassino crucifix reliquary or to the staurotheca it contains.

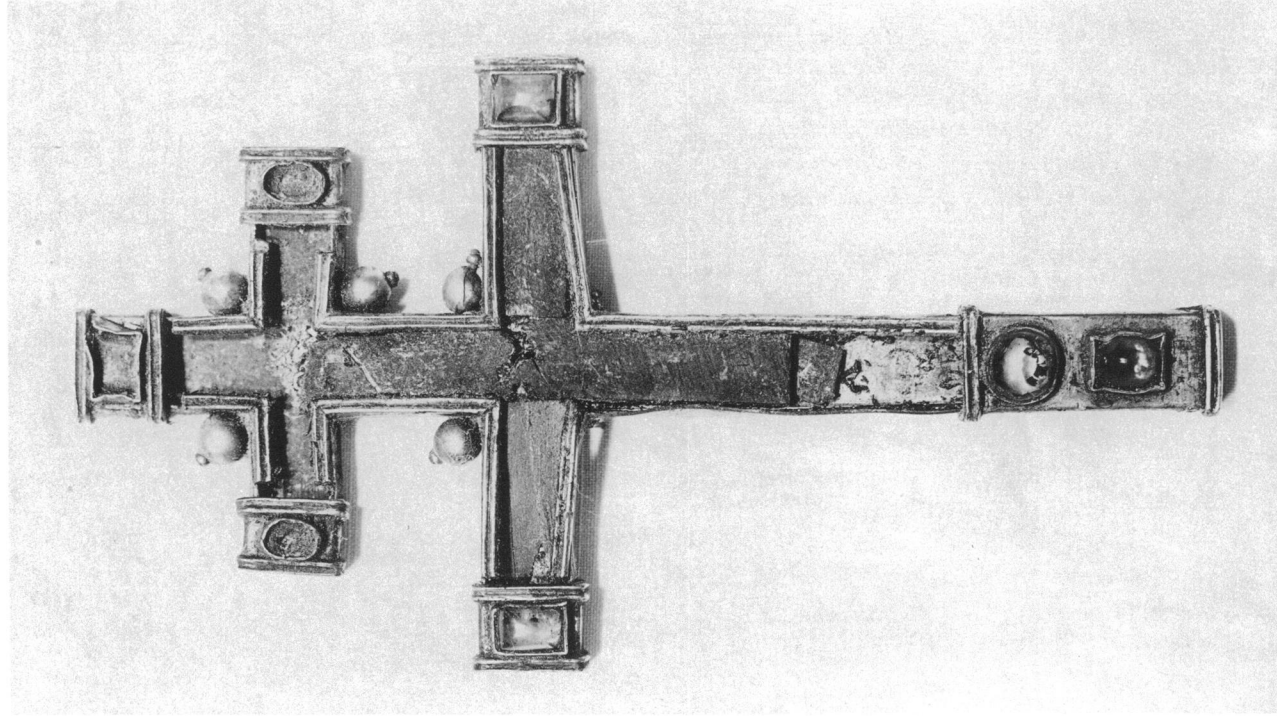


1. Obverse

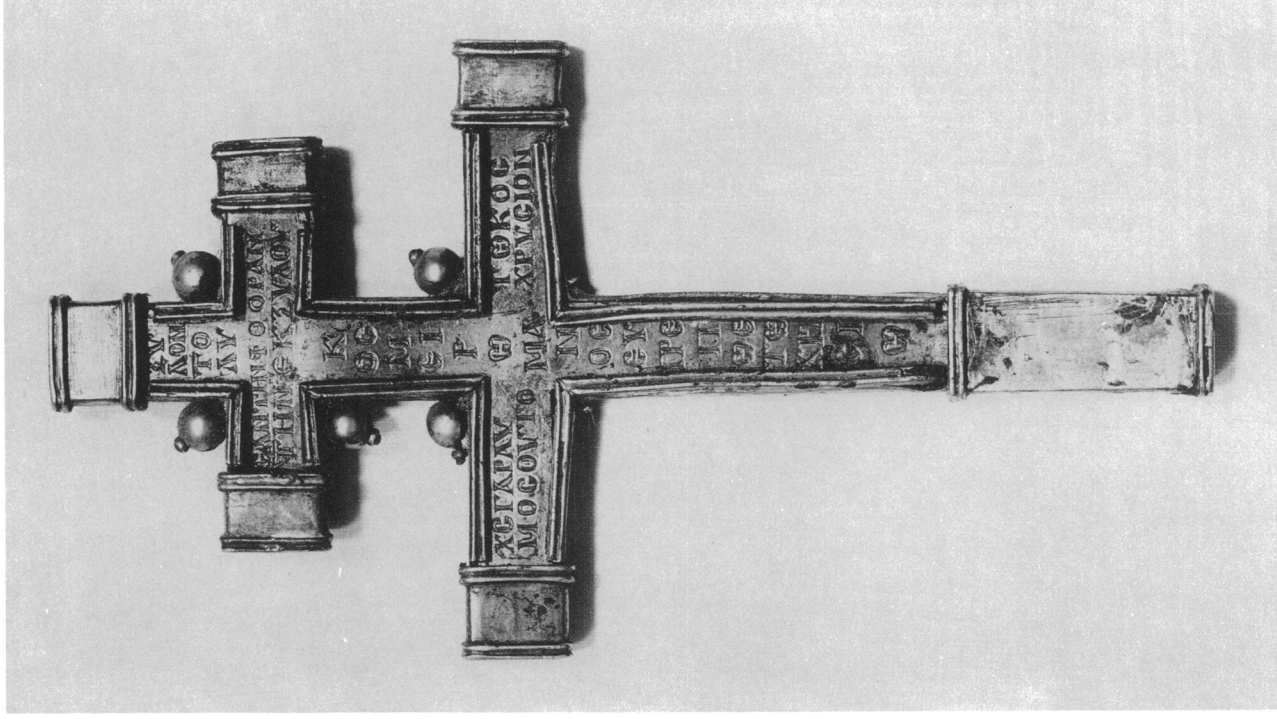


2. Reverse, with Open Metalwork in Center to Reveal Staurotheca

Monte Cassino, Basilica of St. Benedict. Crucifix Reliquary Holding Staurotheca of Romanus



3. Obverse, Showing Wood, Surviving Jewels, and Pearls



4. Reverse, with Inscription

Monte Cassino, Basilica of St. Benedict. Staurotheca of Romanus

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cōpōtō p̄p bēdīcatō quī dū s̄c̄t̄a uēstīat
 cōsuetudīnē hūm p̄uilegīum sumēns.
 p̄ bīennīum quō sup̄ uixit lūp̄t̄ hēnt̄ xū.
 In om̄i p̄spēctatē sūi honōrī dēgēt̄
 p̄lūmōe hīc op̄nāntatē cōdquīuēt̄
 Cūcūcū cōtīgēntatē cōd pēdēndū
 dīebat̄ dōmīnīc̄. & dūc̄ cōmpānōc̄
 mīst̄ mōgīnūcūm cōc pūlch̄tūdīnī
 s̄c̄t̄ lūssīat. Alac̄tē s̄c̄i gēgōrī cōtīgē
 nāt̄ cōbulōc̄ uēldē pūlch̄t op̄i dēcō
 fōrnat̄. F̄cīat̄ & cōp̄sūlōc̄ cōtīgēntatē.
 ubī pōt̄ōnē līgnī dūc̄t̄ cūcūcū quōm
 sup̄rīus cōlōnē mōnācho hīc cōllōcat̄
 ostēdīm̄s s̄c̄t̄ēntē locat̄. Vūstīat̄
 quōq; p̄stōfōlē cūm gāulo mīchīlo
 mīnūc̄ cōtīgēntatē op̄e pūlch̄tō uēstīat̄.
 Eccl̄a p̄r uulōc̄ In honōrē s̄c̄i nīcolāī
 līxat̄ cōbbat̄ cōmēst̄ & cōtē bēat̄ B.
 cōsēpāt̄ dōnōc̄ p̄st̄ cōd lūnē. nēc̄ n̄